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as possible adapted to the capacities of all readers. If this be true, it follows, that the contrary qualities in writing are improper, and ought to be avoided.

It is customary for writers of almost every description, but which it is not necessary to particularize, to interlard their productions with classical quotations; and to such affected lengths is this practice carried, that it is not unusual for some who can write only English, to apply to a classical friend for a supply of Latin for mottoes, &c. Scraps of Latin, Greek, French, or Italian, may be acceptable to those who understand them, but are vexatious stumbling-blocks to the mere English scholar. They are worse than thrown away on him: for, on endeavouring to account for the motive that produced them, it will be natural for him to suppose them inserted to show the writer's learning, if he should not happen to know, that many who follow the practice, require no such aids for that purpose. But whatever he may think of their learning, it is impossible he can form a favourable opinion of the judgment or understanding of those who thus address him in an unknown tongue.

If learned men find, at times, that they can express their ideas with more facility in the words of a foreign or dead language, than in English, or if they find them already expressed by authors in those languages, in an elegant or forcible manner, there can be no reasonable objection to their availing themselves of this advantage, provided they give an English translation for the use of those who cannot translate for themselves. This class, though many of them are in humble life, ought surely to be respected, were it only on account of their numbers, and not be tantalized with words and sentences which they cannot un-

derstand, and have no means of explaining, not one in a thousand of whom, perhaps, have even a Lexicon to which he can refer.

Doctor Johnson set a laudable example, in accompanying the mottoes in his *Rambler* with a translation, and his authority, in this case, it is presumed, no scholar will dispute. Should the precedent set by him, and now recommended, be adopted, it would be a great accommodation to those who have not the advantage of a classical education, and would certainly be no derogation of him who has this advantage. On the contrary, the writer would enjoy the gratifying reflection, that he had communicated that which gave himself pleasure, to those who had no other means of obtaining it; and, on their part, instead of envying his superiority, they will be grateful for his condescension.

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To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

MR. EDGEWORTH, in his Letter to the Lord Primate, on the subject of National Education, recommends, that "in the preparatory schools for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, advantage should be taken of all the improvements suggested by Dr. Bell, Mr. Lancaster, and others, but that no particular mode of teaching should be enjoined, as the best will soon make its way by its own superiority."

With great deference to Mr. Edgeworth, I am of opinion, that, on the outset, one particular mode of teaching should be adopted; and if it should afterwards appear to the inspectors or commissioners, that the plan was capable of improvement, and that by introducing any method peculiar to another system, the origi-

nal plan might be simplified or improved, by their advice and authority it should be adopted. But if the teachers are allowed every one arbitrarily to graft on the system what they may consider improvements, confusion will be the consequence, and in a short time no identity of plan will be preserved, or discoverable throughout the whole; by which means the inspectors will not be so well enabled to judge of the progress made in the different schools, at their visitations; whereas, if one general plan be acted on, the inspectors or visitors will be so intimately acquainted with the whole, that they will have much less trouble in examining the schools, and be better enabled to form a judgment as to the progress made from one examination to another. Not that I would wish to repress the genius of the teachers, or prevent them from suggesting what they may consider improvements: any discovery of that nature made by a teacher I would have him commit to writing, and forward to the commissioners, or put it into the hands of the inspectors, at their visitations, that they might have it in their power to consider of the matter, and provided they should conceive it to be an improvement, that they should order a general adoption of it throughout all the schools. By pursuing this plan, there would be such a similarity in all the schools, that the duty of the inspectors would be easy, and the examination of the schools performed in much less time, and with more correctness, than if every school was to be conducted on a different plan.

From the great superiority of Lancaster's system to all others hitherto invented, in point of economy of teachers, economy of time, economy of books, and regularity of discipline, I am decidedly of opinion, that it is by far the best calculated

for a national system of education. Though it may not yet be arrived at that degree of perfection of which it is capable, and that it may be yet much improved, it is certainly the best system to commence upon, that is at present known. This is no theoretical opinion, but is founded upon experience and observation; and I am perfectly convinced, that with the greatest safety, and with eminent advantages, it might be adopted as the national system of education.

One of the most important parts of Lancaster's system is his mode of classification; his method of dividing the reading classes of his school into eight draws the different degrees in the ascending scale so close to each other in succession, as imperceptibly to lead the children on from one degree of improvement to another; by it there is no danger of a child being puzzled, by attempting to learn what is above his capacity; and by the arrangement of the lessons, which are particularly adapted to the proficiency of the children, it is not in their power, as in other schools, to attempt lessons unsuited to their capacities: the lesson being pasted on a board, and hung up in the appropriate place for each class, the children cannot turn to that which is unsuitable for them, as they can where books are used; in the latter case it would be next to impossible in a large school to confine them to their proper lessons, they having an ambition to push themselves forward, will turn over the leaves of the book to such lessons as they are by no means fitted for.

Lancaster's lessons are arranged for the different classes as follows: 1st class, learns the alphabet; 2nd, spells words or syllables of two letters; 3d, words or syllables of three letters; 4th, words of four letters; 5th, words of five letters, and reads

in easy words of one syllable ; 6th, reads in words not exceeding two syllables ; 7th, in words not exceeding three syllables ; 8th, in any reading, the most difficult.

The time of reading may be for one hour in the day, or for half an hour at different times of the day, the latter of which, I think, answers best ; the remainder of their time they are kept continually writing on slates, except such of them as may be fit for writing on paper, or for arithmetic, who are allowed to write on paper one copy each day, and to spend an hour at arithmetic. Whilst they are writing on the slates, they are also learning to spell, and that without losing time in conning over spelling lessons. This mode of teaching spelling is greatly superior to the old method, as the memory is assisted by the sight, and by the pencil.

The continual round of employment given them, and the variety of the different evolutions consequent to this mode of teaching, are the means of most completely preventing that "listless impatience," so much apprehended by Mr. Edgeworth. So much are the children's minds occupied with the business of the school, that I have been credibly informed, that if, as a punishment for late coming to school, any of them have been detained after the others are dismissed, and they are allowed to go on with their writing, it ceases to operate as a punishment ; and that their detention may have its proper effect, they must be kept idle during their stay.

By this mode of teaching to read, and to spell, there is very considerable saving in the article of books ; one set of lessons, which may cost about two pounds, will be sufficient for a school of 1000 children, for two years, and with care may last for double that time.

Mr. Edgeworth's plan of dismissing the one half of the school after two or three hours attendance, I entirely disapprove of : as I have no doubt but five hours each day may be profitably employed by the youngest children who are the objects of education : for supposing that they were not all the time learning their reading, they are learning what in my mind is of no trifling importance, that is, habits of regularity, discipline, and good order. I am aware that the parents of poor children complain of the want of their children's assistance ; but I am of opinion, it is not so much the want of their help in their own houses, within the hours of attendance at school, but it is that their being at school prevents them having them employed in days works, such as they are capable of : for those few errands they can do for their parents, or little assistance they can render them at home that could not be done for them before or after school hours, and two or three hours in the day, would as much interfere with their employment in days works, as five hours ; they may therefore as well be kept at school for the longer as the shorter time ; and I can assure Mr. Edgeworth, that, provided they are taught upon the Lancasterian plan, they may occupy the full time with great advantage to their education, and without any of that "listless impatience" deprecated by that gentleman. The junior classes, therefore, may with great propriety, be kept as long in school as the upper classes, more particularly as the young ones are the least useful to their parents at home.

Whether Mr. Edgeworth's meaning, with respect to monitors, be the total rejection of the mode of teaching by monitors, so far as relates to the upper classes, or that he only means that great caution should be

used in the selection of them, I am at a loss to know; if the former, I must beg leave to disagree with him, as I conceive it to be a part of the system most essential to a plan of economical teaching. By the use of monitors, one man may be enabled to teach as many children as twenty can do without them, and that to much greater effect; and for a national system of education, what can be of more vital importance. The salaries of teachers are the principal part of the expence; and if it can be reduced, even to a tenth part of what would be required for the old system, can any thing be considered of greater consequence? With respect to the selection of monitors, I hold the same opinion with Mr. Edgeworth, that good temper is a more necessary requisite than shining abilities, as it often happens that persons of superior talents have a degree of impatience in their temper very unsuitable to the character of teachers.

"Whatever plan," says Mr. Edgeworth, "may be adopted for the education of the lower classes, a seminary for masters is indispensably necessary."—"Some of the most promising pupils from Dr. Bell's and Mr. Lancaster's schools might be invited to this country." For the information of Mr. Edgeworth, I can take upon me to say, that there are schools established upon Mr. Lancaster's plan in this country, very capable of giving instruction to masters; and I must also say, that greatly as I admire Mr. Lancaster's plan of education, I am by no means friendly to giving the management of schools to boys: it is not rationally to be expected, that boys can have that necessary influence over boys, that could qualify them for being teachers. In schools, where the morality of the children is as much to be attended to, as their

education, boys are by no means proper masters: the disposition, bent of genius, and other qualities of children, should be the objects of attention in the teacher, and it is not to be expected, that the inexperience of boys is at all calculated to discharge the duties of teachers, under all those circumstances. Rather let steady, regular, and well-informed men be employed; let them be sent to some of the schools already established, and there learn the system, which is practicable for any man of common abilities, by a short time's attendance; they will have the proper and necessary influence over their scholars; they will be able to attend not only to their education, but also to their moral conduct, which it is not by any means to be expected could be obtained by employing boys from another country, who are strangers to the manners and dispositions of the children of this country. I am aware, that Mr. Lancaster has sent out boys to conduct some schools in the country, but this has been the case only, where men could not be procured. Many men have attended his school at the Borough-road, to learn the system, and have afterwards had the management of schools in country places. It is here necessary to mention, that some persons have attempted the system merely from reading Mr. Lancaster's book, without having any actual knowledge of the practical part of the system, but in very few instances have they succeeded: for the system in itself is simple, yet a practical knowledge is essentially necessary, so as to be able to carry it into proper effect, most particularly in large schools, for the want of knowledge in a very trifling circumstance which may not have been detailed in any book, may be productive of much confusion and difficulty; for though simple as the system

is, it contains many parts, and each of these subordinate parts being necessary to the whole, if they are not all acted upon, confusion and difficulty must be the consequence.

Gentlemen, I cannot dismiss the subject, without presenting to our countrymen my most sincere congratulations, that there is a prospect of a system of National Education being established. What a glorious day for Ireland will that be, which shall give birth to such an institution. It will confer immortal honour on the government which shall establish it, and the most substantial benefits will accrue from it to the people at large. This is the means by which to make loyal subjects, and peaceable citizens; to secure the affections, engage the lasting gratitude of the country, and render penal statutes for ever unnecessary.

That the bright sun of education may speedily shed its refulgent beams upon our too long neglected country, and dispel the dark mists of ignorance, superstition, and intolerance, from our land, is the sincere wish of, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

DION.

Belfast.

For the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*.

IN a late number of the Critical Review, the following extract is given from Mrs. Semple's "Thoughts on Education:" "Parents in pleasing their daughters at school, should consider their own circumstances as connected with their future happiness, and that of their children: they distress themselves to give them an expensive education, and what are the consequences? These children acquire habits of refinement at school, which make them esteem the house and the company of their pa-

BELFAST MAG. NO. LVII.

rents unfit for them, which render domestic duties a burden they are unable to bear, which place them in a rank they were not destined to hold. On the other hand, parents have the mortification, after all the privations they have suffered, and the expense they have put themselves to, to discover that they are objects of contempt to their children, that their children are miserable in themselves; and these reflections are accompanied with the bitter conviction, acquired too late, that their own folly has produced such evils to both."

On this passage, the reviewer remarks, "what a melancholy truth is this! If any one doubt it, let them look to the present system of *dash and show*, which is the order of the day. Let them look for wives and mothers, enlightened economists and provident managers, amongst the fine wet-drapery-figures of the daughters of our butchers and bakers, our green-grocers and linen-draperies, and a thousand others. Only let them take a peep into the houses of our farmers; not one in county or district, but throughout the land. Instead of check aprons in the dairy, we shall see Grecian robes; close caps are thrown aside for hair *en papillotes*, comfortable hose and black shoes, for silk stockings and nankeen half-boots."

"It is not, nor it cannot come to good."

Examples are not wanting in our country, I very much fear to prove the truth of Mrs. Semple's observations with regard to the errors of parents in thus educating their daughters, and there are also great evils attending a part of this melancholy system. If girls in this station really make any proficiency in the accomplishments which they are taught, the fond parents are anxious to display their children's acquirements;

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